

It's Starting to Feel A lot like Christmas...

By: Rev. Ralen Robinson

"A merry heart is a good medicine." – Proverbs 17:22

Thanksgiving is over. We are in the Advent/Christmas season. The church's paraments are now blue and the countdown has officially started for Christmas. We are in a new season. We are in a season when we search for miracles, which are much harder to find. A sign of snow brings joy instead of annoyance, a tree symbolizes hope for presents and fellowship, and hot cocoa tastes even sweeter when we're surrounded by cold weather. Nativity scenes are found everywhere, and our paths are illuminated by sparkling lights draped over buildings and homes. Yet, as we bring in a new season those feelings are not felt by all.

This new season can bring pain, grieving, depression, loss, and feelings of inadequacy. The sparkling lights draped on homes can reflect having no home. The scent of cinnamon, cranberry, and nutmeg can bring smells of heartache. The joyous preparation of family gatherings can remind one that one lacks a family. No matter where this new season places you, change is occurring. Today the season has changed, and we are watchful of what is about to unfold and what is to come. This is felt in the air as we countdown till Christmas and church season.

This advent we are called to wait and watch for the coming of the Messiah, the redeemer, and Christ. So, this advent season I challenge you to look around and see how you are being changed in this time and how you are changing others. Those are called to the change you wish to see in the world. That means offering an extra hand this holiday, giving from your heart to those without, giving your time and talent to your community, and allowing the Christmas cheer to fill you up. This Christmas we are reminded that we are given something better than presents and more valuable than gold. Presents of unyielding love, forgiveness, redemption, and comfort.

Merry Christmas Reformation and Happy Holiday



Getting to Know You



The Pippitt Family

- John and Julie joined Reformation soon after moving to Wichita in late 2012.
- They have been married 16 years.
- They grew up in Nebraska, John in Sidney and Julie in Howells. They spent 10 years together in Chicago/New York prior to moving to Wichita.
- They both attended the University of Nebraska. John majored in Mathematics with a minor in economics. Julie received her undergraduate degree in international business and then got her masters degree in international relations from City University of New York in New York City.
- Julie works for INVISTA (a Koch company), and John is responsible for business development for My Container Rental.

- John and Julie have three boys, who were all born in Wichita. Landon is almost 10, Merrick is 8 and Warren is 6. Their extended family lives in Nebraska, Kansas City, Las Vegas and the greater Wichita vicinity.
- Landon is in 4th grade, Merrick is a 2nd grader, and Warren is in Kindergarten at St. Thomas Aquinas.
- What the boys like best about school is resoundingly recess!
- Their favorite subject in school is math.
- The family does not have any pets, despite the constant pleading for one from their children! You'll have to ask the boys to find out who the pet lover is.
- Julie and John love taking their boys to various sporting events and in the little time they have outside of that, they like to golf, cook, garden and travel.
- The boys love sports (baseball, basketball, football, golf).

They like the Rise service because they are early risers and usually have a busy day planned.

Christmas Eve Services



- | | |
|---------|--|
| Dec. 24 | 5 p.m. RISE Service
7 p.m. Traditional Service
Special musical offering by Bell Choir and Reimers Family |
| Dec 25 | No Service -Merry Christmas |



Family Promise families are in need of a little extra warmth and comfort. Can you help? We're urgently seeking: Bath towels, twin & Queen sized sheets and blankets, boy's coats (all sizes), kit's winter clothing (all sizes and genders), kids underwear (all sizes and genders). These items make a BIG difference for families overcoming homelessness and rebuilding their lives. Donations can be placed in the box provided in the Narthex.

This month Council had an in-depth presentation from Cheryl Hoops regarding the Justice Together Program. We now have 11 individuals involved in this program. Council approved becoming a member congregation, and approved a \$2,000 pledge of support for next year.

Property repairs/improvements continue to be a focus. The Digital sign repair was completed on Oct 31st – at \$700 under the estimate. The HVAC unit replacement experienced a few delays but was finally complete on Nov 20th. The repair work to the sidewalk and drainage areas at the East end of the Parish Hall started Nov 18th and should be complete within the week. A special thank you to Dan Wegner for the contact with the contractor who finally made this happen. We are still investigating the various leaks and water issues that pop up during heavy rainfall.

Financial Snapshot:

We are quickly closing in on the end of the year. Our expenses have been managed well and as of the end of October we were \$7,619 under budget. Despite consistent giving, we are still behind our conservatively developed budget by \$19,336. With all of this in mind, with no major expenditures and no improvement in giving, we could possibly finish this year in a deficit situation. We would ask members to prayerfully consider their financial support for our church as we wrap up the year and continue to carry out the mission of Reformation Lutheran Church.

Christmas Eve Prelude for the 5 p.m. service



If you would like to contribute a musical selection for the Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m., please let Erica Hicks know. She is organizing the youth prelude, and your participation would be a wonderful addition to the service.



Meet the Newest Members of Reformation Brian, Heather & Copper

Brian and Heather have lived in Wichita since around 2006. They have been together for a year and a half. Brian is an engineer, and Heather is a math teacher. They enjoy long walks with their dog, Copper, and volunteering at the Lord's Diner. They are very happy to be joining the Reformation Lutheran Church family.



Time to order your Christmas poinsettias. **This year the cost will be \$10.** Orders need to **be placed by December 5th.** Forms and envelopes are available in Narthex. Contact Ruth Ann Koepsel if you have any questions.
◆ 316.648.9654



In the month of December we celebrate the birth of Jesus. In honor of baby Jesus, this month's challenge is **all things baby-related**: jars of baby food, baby cereal, diapers, formula, and on and on. Fill the cart with baby-related products for our infants in the Wichita area.



Christmas Luncheon Reminder

Don't forget if you signed up that the luncheon is on Saturday, December 7 at 11 am to 1 p.m. Look forward to seeing you there!

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is ready for your donations. Select an angel or two or three from the tree, purchase the item printed on the angel, and bring your gift(s) unwrapped to the church and place under the tree. In order for Operation Holiday to meet its timeline, the gifts need to be at the church by Sunday, December 8. Thank you so much for your generous gifts for those in need this holiday season.



upcoming events

- ◆ Dec 1 First Sunday of Advent
- ◆ Dec 7. 11 a.m. Christmas Luncheon
- ◆ Dec. 15 9:45 a.m. Youth Christmas Program
- ◆ Dec. 24 5 p.m. RISE Service/ Youth Service
- ◆ 7 p.m. Traditional Service with special music
- ◆ Dec. 25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED
- ◆ Jan. 26 10 a.m. Congregational Meeting

- ◆ While Pastor finishes her thesis we are happy to have PMA Dallas Rakestraw who will be preaching Sunday, Dec. 8th and Retired Pastor Cheryl Hoops will be leading us in worship Sunday, Dec. 15h.

Youth Group Schedule



December 7th

Christmas Luncheon 11 am (plan to arrive 30min prior so we can go over serving duties)

December 18th

Youth Group Christmas Party at Christ Lutheran Church (5356 N Hillside St) at 8 pm

A wrapped gift for a gift exchange game. The gift can be no more than \$10. It can be a white elephant or, food/candy or something more serious. But you cannot spend more than \$10 on it, and you must bring it wrapped.

February 8th

Youth Event: Simply Hygiene (5440 N Mill Heights Dr, Park City) at 10 am-11:30 am



- ◆ With Christmas coming upon us, it's time to think of Lent! We're looking for some folks who are willing and interested to help with the 2025 Devotional Booklet. The theme is "Be Not Afraid." We will need help as always from people who will write or help edit the booklet.
- ◆ If you are interested, please let Marcia Werts, Ken Hobart or Anita Dorf know. Thanks!



Stephen Ministry

This season can be full of joy. It can also be a time of sorrow as we face familiar times without those we love. Stephen Ministers are available to you to help you through this time. We meet with you, pray with you, and accompany you on your journey to let you know that we are there for you. If talking confidentially with a Christian Caregiver would be helpful for you, let Lotus Gerards know at 316-683-8602.



Nov. 3

RISE	74
Traditional	54
Visitors	00
Total	128

Nov. 10

RISE	61
Traditional	38
Visitors	00
Total	99

Nov. 17

RISE	74
Traditional	38
Visitors	00
Total	112

Nov. 24

RISE	59
Traditional	51
Visitors	04
Total	114

We are going to Angelo's Restaurant, 5900 E Central on December 10 at 6:30 p.m. Contact Lynette Wetta at 316-208-5594 make reservations.



CHRISTMAS



December 15th

Come on out and support our youth. Sunday, Dec. 15th in-between services starting at 9:45am we will be having a Christmas program for the youth. All youth are welcome to participate just show up and find a holiday costume.



Dear Reformation Family,

Our family deeply felt the warmth of your love that was so generously shared with us upon the passing of Gary.

The luncheon, led by Susan Bachman with the help of many "ready to serve volunteers" was delicious! Our youngest grandson, Lawrence, certainly thought so as he devoured 13 turkey sliders!

We want to give a special shoutout to Mark Saunders and Kelsey Rocket of the Rise Band. Their heartfelt performance of John Lennon's Imagine, which is a song declaring hope for world peace and democracy, perfectly honored Gary, who loved the Beatles.

Pastor Ralen, your words about Gary's life of service were deeply moving and touched many hearts! His quiet dedication to serving the Lord was encapsulated in a phrase he liked, "God's Work, Our Hands."

Gratefully yours,
The Gary Hoepner Family
Linda

Jeremy, Mitra, Lexi, & Lawrence
Ryan, Sara, & Jackson Jacob & Hannah



Interested in becoming a Member or Know Someone Who is?

If you want more information about membership at Reformation, contact Rev. Ralen Robinson



In Our Prayers

Pray for healing and safe recovery for the sick, the suffering, those defending our right to freedom of religion, for our siblings in Christ and the following:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Kourtney Franke | Robert Pfeiffer |
| Annette Carson | Sheila Carlson |
| Jessi Coleman | Ed Wilks |
| Kenn Woodard | Marcia Werts |
| Shirley Metz | Rhett Gaida |
| Carole Lyons-Osborne | |
| Larry Allbritten | Marilyn Allbritten |
| Vickie Stoffregen | |

Additional prayer requests may be written in the book at the back of the sanctuary.



- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| Koepsel, Randall | 12/2 |
| Encapera, Lee | 12/3 |
| Greb, Bridget D. | 12/4 |
| Lindemann, Kim- | 12/4 |
| Saunders, Tristen | 12/5 |
| Maier, Diana | 12/6 |
| Mtawali, Aristotle | 12/10 |
| Coleman, Jessica | 12/14 |
| Fornshell, Sharon | 12/14 |
| Dorf, David | 12/15 |
| Muse, Russell | 12/16 |
| Pfeiffer, Robert | 12/18 |
| Kuttler, Amy | 12/19 |
| Whetstone, Jerry | 12/19 |
| Torgerson, Drew | 12/21 |
| Johnson, Lucy | 12/23 |
| Hoepner, Linda | 12/28 |



Justice Together is a county-wide multifaith justice ministry organization of 35 congregations unified by one common call: our faith requires us to "do justice". This year, we won 24/7/365 mental health mobile crisis coverage across Sedgwick County enabling people to stay out of jail and the ER. Because we brought 11,400 people out more than 300 people experiencing mental illness got into a proven program making them 4 times more likely to complete their outpatient recovery. Right now, more than 700 people are living on the streets of Sedgwick County & the number of people dying on our streets has quadrupled since 2022. Since 2019 local officials have promised to launch a one-stop location for people experiencing

homelessness to access emergency shelter, affordable housing, and support services all in one place. Finally, after 5 years, an area has been secured, but the city and county have not committed sustained funding Wichita Mayor Lily Wu and Sedgwick County Board Chair Ryan Baty committed to working together and developing a plan to fill the gaps in the budget at the Justice Together 2024 Nehemiah Assembly. However, both Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita have passed their 2025 budgets without securing the full amount of funding needed. County Board Chair Ryan Baty made clear to us that Sedgwick County does not intend to offer any financial support for this solution. Meanwhile, the City of Wichita committed more funds for displacing homeless encampments than what they've committed for the MAC. The City Council is also exploring even more aggressive policies for removing homeless encampments, even though there aren't currently enough shelter beds to meet the growing demand. As people of faith, we are required to "do justice" for the poor and oppressed. Our scripture tells us that it is up to us to stand up to Pharaoh and the powers that be to hold them accountable. We know we can't do this alone, it is going to take all of us. That is why we are committed to filling the WSU Metroplex this May 8th with more than 1,400 to call on Mayor Wu and County Board Chair Baty to fulfill their promise of a fully funded MAC. Can we count on you to join in building the great assembly for justice by joining as a network member at your congregation?



2025 Quake Feb. 7-9 in Wichita

The 2025 Wichita Quake will be February 7-9 at the Hyatt Regency. The theme will be "Enough," rooted in the powerful words of John 3:16 (NASB). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." For information see <https://quakeevent.com/events/wichita/>.

Hotel room reservations are additional and must be made by January 16th subject to availability.



Puzzle!

Write the answer to each clue in the correct circle. Then jot down the first letter of each answer and unscramble those letters to form a word about this season. Write that answer at the bottom of the tree.



CLUES

1. You trim this at Christmas.
2. One who governs
3. The first word of a popular carol, it means "Listen!"
4. You burn this to make the air sweet.
5. "For unto us is born this day a _____"
6. She was betrothed to Joseph.
7. Shepherds heard them sing.
8. A Christmas song
9. 'Tis the _____ to be jolly!"

Bible Quiz


Who was governor of Syria when Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem for a mandated registration, or census?

A. Theophilus
B. Herod Antipas
C. Pontius Pilate
D. Quirinius

Answers: 1. B; 2. C; 3. A; 4. D; 5. E; 6. F; 7. G; 8. H; 9. I

Answers: 1. Tree; 2. ruler; 3. hark; 4. incense; 5. Savior; 6. Mary; 7. angels; 8. Carol; 9. season, Christmas

December 2024

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
1	8:30 a.m. Rise Worship 9:45 a.m. Learning for all ages 11 a.m. Traditional Worship	2	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 p.m. Back to Basics	3	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 9 a.m. Blanket Makers 9 a.m. Pastor Office Hours	4	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 10 a.m. Pastor Office Hours	5	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 6 p.m. Worship Board 7 p.m. Fellowship	6	Office Closed 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Decorate for luncheon	7	9-11 a.m. set up 11 a.m. Christmas Luncheon
8	Homebound Communion 8:30 a.m. Rise Worship 9:45 a.m. Learning for all ages 11 a.m. Traditional Worship	9	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 p.m. Back to Basics	10	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 9 a.m. Blanket Makers 9 a.m. Pastor Office Hours 9 a.m. Stephen Ministry	11	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 10 a.m. Pastor Office Hours 10:30 a.m. In Reach	12	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 10 a.m. Rebecca Circle	13	Office Closed	14	
15	Ref/Life Deadline 8:30 a.m. Rise Worship 9:45 a.m. Youth Christmas Prog. 11 a.m. Traditional Worship	16	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 3 p.m. MOSAIC - Conf. Rm. 7 p.m. Back to Basics	17	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 9 a.m. Blanket Makers 9 a.m. Pastor Office Hours 7 p.m. Church Council	18	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 10 a.m. Pastor Office Hours 1:00pm Dorcas Circle 8 p.m. Youth Group Christmas Party	19	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m.	20	Office Closed	21	7a.m. St. Paul's Community Breakfast Winter Solstice
22	8:30 a.m. Rise Worship 9:45 a.m. Learning for all ages 11 a.m. Traditional Worship	23	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 p.m. Back to Basics	24	Office Open 9am-12pm 9 a.m. Blanket Makers 9 a.m. Pastor Office Hours	25	Office Closed 	26	Office Closed	27	Office Closed	28	
29	8:30 a.m. Rise Worship 9:45 a.m. Learning for all ages 11 a.m. Traditional Worship	30	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 7 p.m. Back to Basics	31	Office Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 9 a.m. Blanket Makers 9 a.m. Pastor Office Hours	